

# Retirement Timeline Checklist

A short guide to making sense of  
important retirement dates



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Every stage of retirement is full of milestone dates to keep in mind; so many in fact, that the prospect of tracking and staying on top of each can be daunting. That's why we created a retirement checklist to help you stay on top of your overall financial picture.

Use this summary page for a quick overview of what to look for at each date, and **then follow the links to a standalone article to give a better understanding of the each topic.**

- Age 50 - **Catch-up Contributions**: Catch-Up Contributions for 401(k)s, employer-sponsored plans, and IRAs begin. \$8,000 for 401k (\$32,500 total), \$1,100 for IRAs (\$8,600 total).
- Age 55 - **Rule of 55 Distributions & HSA Catch-Up**: Certain employer-sponsored retirement plans allow distributions without penalty beginning at age 55. HSA contributions are now eligible for a \$1,000/year additional catch up for those over age 55.
- Age 59 1/2 - **Plan Withdrawals**: Withdrawals from all employer-sponsored plans, IRAs, and annuities are no longer subject to 10% early withdrawal penalty.
- Age 62 - **Social Security (Earliest Retirement Age)**: Minimum age to begin taking Social Security retirement benefits. For each year you defer this benefit, your monthly payment will be larger.
- Age 60-63 - **Special Catch-Up Retirement Contributions**: In 2026,, employees aged 60-63 will be eligible for a total of \$11,250/yr in catch-up contributions into 401(k) accounts (\$35,750 total).
- Age 65 - **Medicare**: Most become eligible for health insurance through Medicare at age 65. It is important to consider needs at this stage and choose the Medicare plan that best fits your personal circumstances.
- Age 66-67 - **Social Security (Full Retirement Age)**: Depending on the year of your birth, you will become eligible for full retirement benefits from Social Security at some point between age 66-67. At this age, you will be eligible to continue working and not have Social Security benefits reduced.
- Age 70 - **Full Social Security Benefit**: At age 70, you will be eligible for the largest Social Security benefit allowed to you. Waiting any more past this point to claim Social Security will not increase your monthly payment and only ends up reducing your total, lifetime benefit.
- Age 70 1/2 - **Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCDs)**: These are transfers direct from an IRA account to a qualified charity. QCDs are excluded from taxable income and can be counted towards satisfying RMDs for the year, once RMDs begin.
- Age 73-75 - **Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs)**: These are calculated minimum amounts that you must withdraw each year from retirement savings accounts (i.e. 401k, 403b, IRA, etc), beginning at age 73. This is an increase from those previously grandfathered into either age 70 ½ or age 72.
  - Year of Birth 1951-1959: RMDs begin at age 73
  - Year of Birth 1960 or Later: RMDs begin at age 75.

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